Kao Tsu fixed his capital in the former domains of Ch'in, on the broad plain of the Wei River, at Ch'angan, a few miles northwest of the later Ch'angan of the T'ang and not very far from the capital which Shih Huang Ti had built. He retained, too, much of the governmental machinery of Ch'in. In at least one very important respect, however, he departed from the organization of Shih Huang Ti: he divided the realm into principalities, placing over them members of his family and military commanders who had done him marked service. The chief of these had the time-honored title of *Wang.* The provision was prohably wise at the time as a means of preventing or suppressing sedition. Moreover, the *Wang* were few in number and were kept under a kind of surveillance by counselors appointed by the Emperor. Their domains did not supplant the administrative divisions of the Ch'in, but the latter were continued and were governed by the hierarchy of Shih Huang Ti, modified somewhat, but still appointed by the Emperor. In spite of safeguards, however, the creation of the *Wang* brought its problems, for it repeatedly threatened the renewed disintegration of the Empire. Feudalism, in a modified form, once more raised its head.

With all of Kao Tsu's skill and power, his authority was by no means undisputed and much of his reign was troubled by revolts. These he suppressed, however, and so successfully did he do his work—steering a middle course between the feudal anarchy of the later years of the Chou and the extreme centralization of the Ch'in—that when he died (B.C. 195) the throne passed on to his family without such a major upheaval as had followed the demise of Shih Huang Ti.

The unity of the Empire and the continuation

on the throne of the line of Kao Tsu were both helped and endangered by his widow Lii Hou, who survived him fifteen years. Lii Hou had been Kao Tsu's wife from the days of his obscurity and, being a woman of masculine mind and indomitable will developed by the hardships which the pair had early undergone, she is said to have been in large part responsible for the eventual triumph of her spouse. During the later years of Kao Tsu the two saw less and less of each other, but when the change of reign came she succeeded in having her own son, a mere lad, placed on the throne. Another son, born of Kao Tsu's favorite concubine, she had